

nothing but pollute the minds of our young children.

Parents and families deserve schools they can trust. As one of the Representatives for Tennessee and as the father of two young children, I am working to put power back into the hands of parents, families, and local school leaders.

Let's make student welfare and traditional education the only special interest we fund and promote when it comes to our children's schools, not leftwing efforts to turn schools into far left, ideological indoctrination centers.

Mrs. MILLER of Illinois. To conclude, Madam Speaker, I want to say that we want our children to be smart; we want them to master the core subjects; and we want them to love their neighbor and their country.

Please do not underestimate the power of regular people to defend their children and their country.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1815

#### TOXIC MILITARY BURN PITS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. RUIZ) for 30 minutes.

##### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RUIZ. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. RUIZ. Madam Speaker, I rise today to tell the story of my constituent, Jennifer Kepner and to call for immediate action on the most pressing public health issue facing our veterans: toxic military burn pits.

Four years ago, I met a veteran named Jennifer Kepner at her home in Cathedral City, California, in my district. Jennifer, a 39-year-old mother of two, was one of the most inspiring and brave people I have ever met, and that kitchen table conversation was one of the most impactful conversations in my life.

When I met her, she was cachectic. You could see her bones. She was wasting away. She was battling pancreatic cancer and was on chemotherapy. You could see the port in her chest and you could see the loss of hair. And she was still so very full of energy inside to tell her story and sound the alarm.

Her doctor linked her exposure to burn pits during her service overseas. You see, she was described as a health nut, as someone thin, healthy, who liked to run, and jog. Her friends would say: She was one of those crazy people who would wake up at 4 in the morning and go on a 5-mile run routinely.

So when she came down with pancreatic cancer at such a young age, her physicians looked at her DNA, her family history, and they concluded that the most likely cause, given her low risk, was her exposure to toxic military burn pit smoke.

I sat with her in her home as she told me her story. She told me about her military service as an Air Force medic caring for our men and women in uniform who were injured or sick. You see, she was stationed at Balad Air Base in Iraq. She told me about her husband and their two children, Adia and Wyatt, who she loved so very dearly.

She told me about burn pits, these huge fields where the military burns trash—anything and everything—including batteries, jet fuel, medical waste, plastics, and other hazardous material causing servicemembers to inhale toxic chemicals, carcinogens, and particulate matter.

They call it the crud, you see, because after a long day in the desert serving our country, they go to their camp wanting a little rest, and they smell this black toxic chemical smoke and they get the soot on their face, in their nostrils, in their throat. They have itchy eyes, a runny nose, a sore throat. They cough, and that is just another day at a base serving our country.

Jennifer spent her last month as a leading voice for her fellow veterans exposed to burn pits which she called “the Agent Orange of our generation.”

Wow. “The Agent Orange of our generation.” We all are infuriated with the way that our Vietnam veterans were denied and their care was delayed and their recognition had been postponed when they were saying, “We are sick.” Their children are born malformed. They are infertile. They have other issues and syndromes and symptoms that are life-threatening and debilitating.

She is saying that this is the Agent Orange of our generation, and she knew that she was going to die. She knew that her days were limited. She knew that pancreatic cancer is the most aggressive cancer that causes death within months after diagnosis.

She didn't give up. She didn't give up, despite the VA denying her the recognition that it was the burn pits that caused her pancreatic cancer. She didn't give up. Despite the VA denying her the benefits that she needed for her family, she didn't give up. Her dying wish was to ensure two things: one, was that other veterans didn't have to struggle through a system that denied and delayed and did not recognize her illness so that she said: Let's help other veterans.

The second was: Please help my husband, Ben, get the benefits to care for my children. In her last dying days she was thinking of others with that heart of a servant and the fierce determination of a warrior.

I remember getting the call when I was in my district office that she was

dying, and she would potentially die within a few hours.

I fell to my knees and I cried. I composed myself and I thought, as a physician, there are only certain things that I can do in the art and science of medicine, but I know that there is a greater healer; that there is a greater power, and perhaps this is what I can bring to serve the family at this moment. So I invited my pastor, Gerald Sharon, to come with me so that we could pray with her on her deathbed.

There she was, taking her last breaths. Her mother was there crying. Her husband was trying to keep it together. Her children were at her side. The youngest one was too young to understand what was happening. The older one, the daughter, was a little more aware, but she was trying to keep it together.

We did our prayer, and she died on October 18, 2017. Since then, it has been my mission to make her vision a reality.

Her story drove me to found the bipartisan, bicameral Congressional Burn Pits Caucus with my friend and colleague Congressman BRAD WENSTRUP from Ohio.

Her story inspired me to work with brilliant minds across the aisle like my friend who is sitting here, Representative GUS BILIRAKIS, to introduce legislation in a bipartisan manner.

And her strength inspired me to co-author my bipartisan, bicameral legislation, the Presumptive Benefits for War Fighters Exposed to Burn Pits and Other Toxins Act, to get veterans the benefits and care they have earned and need and deserve.

Her vision is reflected in the Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxins Act, or the Honoring Our PACT Act, which includes my legislation to keep our Nation's promise to our veterans to take care of them after they serve our Nation.

Her stories and the countless stories of other veterans that you will hear today by Republicans and Democrats are speaking to us beyond the grave to act now with urgency for their fellow veterans and for their families. Under the leadership of our great chairman of the VA Committee, Chair MARK TAKANO, we will get this done.

We cannot sit by while the veterans Jennifer served with are denied the healthcare and benefits they have earned and deserve. No one who has served and sacrificed for our Nation should have to face the trials that she endured to get the medical care that she needed, or their widows the benefits to support their families with a life of dignity.

In 1 week, we will celebrate Veterans Day and show our appreciation for all of those who served our Nation in our Armed Forces. Some will wear red, white, and blue attire. Some will even go as far as to make public displays of hugging a flag, and some will always say the same old thing: Thank you to our veterans. Thank you to our veterans for your service.

I have said consistently that our veterans appreciate the thanks but they really need pragmatic support.

On Memorial Day, the way we memorialize and honor the dead is by serving the living and improving their lives.

They might have survived the battlefield, but they are dying from their exposures of a self-inflicted Department of Defense wound to our men and women in uniform by using these burn pits that, by the way, are illegal and banned in the United States precisely for their public health hazards.

We need pragmatic support, not lip service or empty gestures in our appreciation and celebration on Veterans Day. We must act now and get our veterans the healthcare and benefits they have earned when we sent them to war for our country.

Servicemembers are returning home from the battlefield right now only to become delayed casualties of war, dying years later from constrictive bronchiolitis, pulmonary fibrosis, brain cancer, breast cancer, pancreatic cancer, gastric cancers, and autoimmune diseases caused by their exposure to the toxic, hundreds of chemicals from burned plastics, jet fuels, and hazardous materials that they inhaled while serving our Nation.

The DOD and the VA cannot continue to neglect this self-inflicted wound on our veterans. So in Jennifer's name and the countless names of the veterans who have suffered and some succumbed to their illnesses due to their exposures to burn pits, we all will continue fighting tooth and nail to protect our servicemembers and our veterans from toxic burn pits.

She would never turn her back on a fellow veteran, and as a nation, neither can we.

I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO), my friend, my neighbor, and the chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, a true champion for our veterans and the sponsor of Honoring our PACT Act.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I thank my neighbor and very good friend, Dr. RAUL RUIZ, for holding and hosting this Special Order hour on toxic exposures.

Madam Speaker, tonight I rise to talk about the urgent need to finally recognize toxic exposure as a cost of war and pass the Honoring Our PACT Act.

Every day I hear from more and more veterans who have been exposed to toxic substances while serving our Nation. Whether it is exposure to burn pits, contaminated water, radiation, or other toxins, the health effects are often severe from chronic multisymptom illnesses, to cancers, birth defects, infertility, and respiratory conditions.

This problem isn't new, and neither is the need for congressional intervention. As chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I was proud to lead the effort last Congress to pass the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act and get long-overdue jus-

tice for our Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange. But that took more than 40 years. We cannot let our post-9/11 veterans suffer the same fate. And, yes, we are in danger of having burn pits become this generation of veterans' Agent Orange.

We cannot allow this generation of veterans to go the 40 years that our Vietnam veterans had to wait for their justice.

□ 1830

When we send our servicemembers into harm's way, we do so with a promise to care for them and pay for that care. We haven't been keeping up our end of the deal. Hundreds of thousands of veterans have signed up for VA's burn pit registry. However, with 70 percent of burn pit claims denied, it is clear that VA's current claims process isn't working. No veteran should be forced to prove that their government exposed them to toxic substances. The Honoring our PACT Act fixes that and finally makes good on our promise.

With our bipartisan legislation, we can deliver VA benefits and care to up to 3.5 million veterans exposed to burn pits and airborne hazards. We can establish a presumption of service connection for 23 respiratory illnesses and cancers, the most comprehensive list out there. Additionally, we can streamline VA's review process for toxic exposure presumptions, so Congress doesn't have to keep intervening.

With the exit from Afghanistan still fresh in our minds, we cannot forget that the true cost of war is so much more than the tanks, planes, and weapons used on the battlefield. Veterans living with toxic exposure are still in the heat of battle, and they are paying for the cost of war that our Nation should be paying. That is why we need to pass the Honoring our PACT Act into law. With 60 cosponsors, bipartisan support, endorsements from nine veteran services organizations, and a VA Secretary and President who are committed to addressing this issue, we have the momentum to get this done.

With every day that passes, more veterans get sick and, sadly, die waiting for the care and benefits they have earned. We must act now. I want to thank Dr. RUIZ and the Congressional Burn Pits Caucus for partnering with my committee to share the stories of toxic-exposed veterans today and showcase how transformative passing the Honoring our PACT Act will be.

With Veterans Day right around the corner, we can honor our veterans' service with action. I urge all Members to consider sponsoring our legislation.

Mr. RUIZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CASTRO), my friend, who is a member of the Congressional Burn Pits Caucus.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Madam Speaker, I thank Congressman RUIZ for organizing this Special Order.

Madam Speaker, I rise today to share the story of Marine Corporal William Garza, Jr.

William joined the Marines in the summer before 9/11. His first deployment was to Iraq in 2003, where he participated in the fall of Baghdad. It was there, during war, where he was exposed to burn pits.

When I met William, he told me that he and his fellow marines would sleep and work around burn pits 24/7. These burn pits were as big as football fields, burning tires, human waste, metals, and electronics. William, like many servicemembers, didn't know the dangers of burn pit exposure.

After serving his country with honor, he returned home to Texas, and he soon met the love of his life, Melanie, and they would marry, buy a home, and start living their American Dream.

Soon after his marriage, William developed a sore on his tongue, but he struggled to get an appointment with the VA. When he did, it confirmed his worst fear: cancer.

He would receive treatment at Brooke Army Medical Center, where the doctors would perform a miracle throat cancer treatment. William beat cancer.

Then, a few years later, he received terrible news during a VA checkup. He had two tumors in his lungs, and he would need immediate treatment.

But then, making matters worse, he received a letter from the VA denying his service-connected disability claim. This time around the chemo and immunotherapy would not be as successful, and his cancer spread. On March 4, 2019, in San Antonio, Texas, William died, and our Nation lost a hero.

His mother, Rose, who I had the pleasure of speaking with, calls him "William, my Hero."

Marine Corporal William Garza, Jr., deserved better.

I hope William's story creates an urgency in Congress to address this generation's Agent Orange.

Burn pits have destroyed servicemembers' lives and American families. Let's not let another veteran receive a denial of benefits letter. Let's work together to honor our Nation's sacred obligation to our men and women in uniform.

Mr. RUIZ. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS), my friend and colleague, a member of the Congressional Burn Pits Caucus, and a fierce advocate for our veterans.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Madam Speaker, I want to thank my good friend, Dr. RUIZ, for organizing this very important Special Order. I know he is a terrific doctor, and the fact that he has sacrificed to be here, to complete the mission. I appreciate it so very much. I have a similar story as well, but we must complete this mission as soon as possible. As Jennifer said, this is the Agent Orange of our era.

Providing the care and support for our veterans, our Nation's heroes, has been one of my top priorities since I was elected to Congress, and I will continue to fight to ensure that our veterans get the benefits they deserve.

As a matter of fact, after one of our hearings a few years ago on the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, we had many veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange. Their families were present with them, their children were present with them, and I invited them into my office. One-on-one, they told me the stories of what happened. The spouses would tell me: my husband, my wife, was exposed, and now he or she can't work. Who is going to support the family? What is going to happen to these children if their father or mother passes away? Who is going to take care of them? They need healthcare now. They need their benefits now.

We can't wait any longer, Madam Speaker. Burn pits are the Agent Orange of our era, as Jennifer said. And the fact that we haven't resolved the issue of burn pit exposure is an absolute disservice to our veterans. They were exposed, and we must help them.

I have fought for over multiple Congresses, with my colleague Dr. RUIZ and my colleague BRAD WENSTRUP from the great State of Ohio, leading and sponsoring numerous pieces of legislation to get toxic-exposed veterans the treatment and benefits they deserve, because many cannot afford to wait any longer.

Tragically, one of our veterans came to me a few years ago, Lauren Price. Similar to Dr. RUIZ and Jennifer, we made it our mission to get this done. During Lauren's service to our country, she was exposed to burn pits. This past spring, she sadly passed away due to an illness linked to her burn pit exposure, but not before taking up the cause for her fellow veterans to make sure they or their families would not have to experience the same suffering she and her family experienced. Lauren knew that she was going to pass away, but she wanted to make it better for her fellow veterans. Her goal was to pass this legislation and similar legislation that Dr. RUIZ and I have cosponsored over the years.

I was incredibly moved to see her husband and my good friend, Jim Price, continue this tireless advocacy by testifying as a witness before the Veterans' Affairs Committee just this past year in support of the TEAM Act, which would comprehensively address toxic exposures now and in the future.

This critical bill adopts provisions for my legislation that I previously authored, the Protection for Veterans' Burn Pit Exposure Act.

I urge Congress to take up and pass the TEAM Act immediately. If we are going to be spending money, Madam Speaker, let's spend it on our heroes.

I am also proud to co-lead a host of additional burn pit legislative fixes with Dr. RUIZ and urge immediate action in the House and Senate on H.R. 4398, H.R. 4397, H.R. 2432, and H.R. 2371.

While both H.R. 4398 and H.R. 4397 were included in the House version of the NDAA, we must continue pushing until they are across the finish line and signed by the President.

Again, I thank my good friend, Dr. RUIZ, for organizing this Special Order. I can't think of a more worthy cause than providing for these veterans in their time of need, just as they provided for our country when we needed them. Let's get this done for our veterans.

Mr. RUIZ. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN), who I am proud to have join me as a cosponsor of the Honoring our PACT Act and a member of the bipartisan Congressional Burn Pits Caucus.

Mr. RYAN. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from California for his leadership. I want to thank Chairman TAKANO, who has been responsible for really taking care of the veterans. He helped us rename our clinic back in Youngstown after Carl Nunziato, who is a tremendous Vietnam veteran. I also want to thank the gentleman from Cincinnati, my home State, for being a part of all of this and being a leader in all of this. I want to thank him for that.

Madam Speaker, I rise tonight in honor of the memory of Ohio Army Guardsman Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson. I met Heath's daughter, Brielle, a few months back and heard the story of Heath from his mother-in-law, Susan.

These stories, as you have heard tonight, are heartbreaking. Because when you look at Brielle and his wife, Danielle, this is more than just we have got to get something fixed to take care of a veteran who served their country. This is the modern version of Agent Orange.

But this is bringing so much heartbreak to so many families and to so many communities in States like Ohio where we have so many veterans who served their country.

On March 21, 2017, Heath and his wife, Danielle, were sitting in an exam room at Zangmeister Cancer Center in Columbus, Ohio, when Heath was given a terminal diagnosis. He had only 6 weeks to live.

At only 35 years old, Heath was suffering from gushing nosebleeds and bleeding from his ears. Dozens of doctors were unable to provide answers, but they all did have one question: What in the hell have you been exposed to?

It turns out that Heath, a combat medic, had spent every day for 3 months within 15 yards of a massive burn pit at Camp Liberty complex in Iraq.

Heath was afflicted with a rare autoimmune disease that mostly strikes elderly women and an extremely rare form of lung cancer that, according to 20 oncologists, could have only been caused by a prolonged exposure and inhalation of toxic substances.

Madam Speaker, how can we pretend that both the VA and we, as a Nation, do not owe the veterans like Heath and their families both the care and the benefits that they have earned, often with their very lives? This is not who we are as a country.

We have got to fix this in Congress. The time is now. Not next year, not 5 years from now, but now, right now.

Servicemembers like Heath, and countless others, thousands, maybe tens of thousands, spent the last 20 years fighting our Nation's longest war. We cannot turn our backs on them.

I have introduced legislation to help collect the data so that the VA has it and that every 3 months they report to this Congress as to what the data is and what the claims are so we can hold them accountable.

Most importantly, I want to thank Danielle, I want to thank Susan. And I want to let Brielle and Danielle and Susan know, and their family, that there are so many prayers coming to them from this Congress.

But we are going to get it done, and we are going to get it done soon. It is going to be a bipartisan effort with guys like the gentleman from Cincinnati and the gentleman from California and myself. Let's get this thing done.

Mr. RUIZ. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WENSTRUP), the co-chair of the bipartisan Congressional Burn Pits Caucus.

Mr. WENSTRUP. Madam Speaker, we are here tonight to recognize and bring awareness to our servicemembers who are dealing with health issues caused by exposure to burn pits and other toxins during their tour of duty.

These brave men and women answered the call. They were willing to lay down their lives for our freedom, and they served us honorably.

Unknowningly, by following orders, they put themselves in harm's way.

As our military continues to adapt, we are learning that certain amounts of exposure to burn pits can potentially present troublesome and life-threatening health challenges, some that don't show up until later in life.

When I served in Iraq, I smelled the smoke, and I don't wish it upon anyone. Those suffering from the repercussions of burn pit exposure need help, not hurdles. We must meet them with compassion, not red tape. That is why I am proud to work with fellow members of the Congressional Burn Pit Caucus, as well as friends on the Veterans' Affairs Committee, to put forth bipartisan solutions to help our servicemembers. We must prevent this in the future and care for those that have borne the battle.

I want to thank my friend, Dr. RUIZ, for hosting this Special Order. I am proud to work with him on this issue, as I have been proud to work with him on so many other issues on behalf of patients.

□ 1845

Mr. RUIZ. Madam Speaker, how much time do I have remaining? Do I have 1 minute remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mrs. DINGELL. Madam Speaker, this month, we will pause on November 11th to honor the men and women who have selflessly served America in uniform. Veterans of the United States Armed Forces have dedicated their lives to protecting our nation, and it is critical we express our sincere gratitude for the sacrifices they have made.

I appreciate the opportunity to draw awareness to a critical issue affecting both veterans and current servicemembers—toxic exposure.

Toxic exposure has affected U.S. servicemembers for generations. While each war and conflict has posed unique hazards and health risks for servicemembers, our nation's youngest veterans are increasingly facing health consequences due to exposure to toxic chemicals during their military service in the Middle East.

Over the past two decades in the Middle East, open burn pits were commonly used as disposal sites for materials such as trash, weapons, batteries, and other waste. Servicemembers are concerned about the illnesses that are linked to exposure to the toxic fumes and smoke emitted by these burn pits, especially as some have begun developing rare cancers and illnesses at higher rates than their counterparts that were deployed to other parts of the world.

Michigan-native Kevin Hensley is one such veteran who has been deeply impacted by burn pits. Kevin is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force who was deployed to the Middle East eight times and stationed near open air burn pits during four of his deployments. After retiring and moving back to Wayne County in 2015, Kevin's health began rapidly deteriorating. By 2017, Kevin had been diagnosed with Constrictive Bronchiolitis, and later brain scans revealed serious damage from inhaling toxic smoke.

Kevin struggles with daily tasks, saying he finds it difficult to go grocery shopping without gasping for air. Equally upsetting, Kevin has faced challenges receiving care through the VA. Only in 2020 did the VA formally expand benefits for veterans suffering with illnesses related to exposure to burn pits. Still, veterans must shoulder a burden of proof, which requires them to precisely pinpoint where and when they may have been exposed to burn pits. As a result, the VA continues to deny an overwhelming number of burn-pit related disability claims.

Unfortunately, Kevin's story is one of far too many. Our nation's veterans deserve better, and we must recommit ourselves to this effort to ensure veterans receive the benefits and care they're entitled to.

That's why I'm a proud cosponsor of H.R. 3967, the Honoring Our Promises to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2021. This bipartisan bill will provide vital support to veterans who have been exposed to burn pits and other toxins and ensure they can access crucial healthcare services through the VA.

I thank Rep. RUIZ for his steadfast leadership on toxic exposure and burn pits. I urge all my colleagues to support this important legislation and continue pursuing other legislative solutions that will ensure our servicemembers have access to the healthcare they deserve.

#### DO BETTER FOR VETERANS

(Mr. WELCH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELCH. Madam Speaker, Vermonters have done their full measure of service throughout our history, and that is true in Iraq and Afghanistan. Two of our great soldiers, Sergeant Major Michael Cram and Brigadier General Michael Heston, both died of cancers that we believe were related to their exposures to burn pits.

Their wonderful widows, Pat Cram and June Heston, have been so vigilant and energetic in putting a focus on the devastation of these burn pits and played a major role in encouraging the VA to, A, get a registry; B, the Defense Department to stop exposing people to burn pits; and then, C, to have us presume that those who have been exposed to burn pits and developed a disease as a result of that are entitled to VA benefits. We must get this done.

#### AMERICA'S BUDGET WOES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SCHWEIKERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. SCHWEIKERT. Madam Speaker, as we get ourselves sort of organized, last Monday, I did an entire hour here on the floor—55 minutes—and we actually did a presentation up and down the budget. Not this budget cycle, but basically what does our country look like over the next 30 years? What is driving the projections of \$112 trillion of debt 29 years from now?

Look, it is one of those presentations that is rather uncomfortable for most of us because the punch line is demographics, and that is not what we typically do here. But the reality is, we have a real issue. We are getting old very fast as a society.

Let's do a bit of a reminder here and actually look at the math. We are going to walk through a couple of these that are the same as last week, but the difference tonight is we are going to try to talk about a handful of solutions. There is a big package of solutions, and most of them are really hard and are really going to be cantankerous around here, but there are solutions to deal with.

Let's actually first walk through where we are at today. Once again, I won't worry about 1965 in the mix. It is important that anyone watching this, fellow Members of Congress, understand.

Today, 2021, 77 percent of all the spending that will come from Washington is mandatory. Only 10 percent is defense; 13 percent is functionally what we vote on. I think there is a huge misunderstanding in the public that we march off to Congress and are voting on these \$4 trillion budgets. We are not. We are functionally voting on this little green wedge here that is discretionary spending.

So if I came to you right now and said, okay, what is driving the debt

over the next 30 years? I am going to show you a number of slides that are going to show the budget is in balance except for two things—Social Security and Medicare. And it is mostly Medicare.

Social Security is actually quite fixable. There is a number of levers. None of the levers will make anyone particularly excited or happy, but we once calculated we had 24, 26 different levers to make Social Security solvent and keep our promises.

Remember, Social Security and Medicare are earned benefits. It is a societal contract. We have an obligation to be there.

But Medicare is a really tough one, and we need to actually go back to having the honest conversation about what drives much of this debt. Well, if you see here, this is taxes paid in, benefits out for Social Security. You notice they are pretty much in balance. Social Security is a fairly square deal. You get a little bit of a SPIF, on average, for the average American.

Where the numbers get really difficult is the average American couple is going to put in about \$161,000 into the part A Medicare, which is only the trust fund for just the hospital portion. The pharmaceuticals, the other doctor visits, the other things are general fund. So when you are paying your FICA tax, you are paying this here.

But that average couple is going to get \$522,000 in benefits. So the differential from \$161,000 to \$522,000 is the driver of the vast majority of U.S. sovereign debt over the next 30 years. It is this differential here. It is not that complicated.

One of the great frustrations here is my brothers and sisters on the left will come behind the microphone and say things like: Well, if we had Medicare for All, or we expanded the ACA, ObamaCare. That is not true. If anyone just takes a quick breath and steps back—and, look, Republicans are guilty on part of this, too. Those are financing bills. The ACA was financing it, who got subsidized and who has to pay. Medicare for All is just a change of who pays. None of that is about what we pay. And the Republican alternative was the same. It was about who got subsidized and who had to pay.

So what we are going to talk about are some of the revolutions in what we pay, changing the cost of healthcare. But we first need to understand the scale of these. Look, this is functionally the same size as we just had, but it is important to understand that for every dollar in, particularly on Medicare, we get \$3 in benefits back. And now you start to do that with the demographics of the country.

This is just a graphic. So you see the orange here. That is us just getting old. That is just simply us moving into our benefit years. The green is healthcare costs. We have known people were going to turn 65 for how many years in this country? And we are still avoiding the issue.